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CC:
Date: 5/29/2013 12:53:03 PM
Subject: KMOX Radio St. Louis - EPA: Radiation at West Lake Landfill Poses No Health Threat

KMOX Radio St. Louis

EPA: Radiation at West Lake Landfill Poses No Health Threat

May 29, 2013 1:28 PM -

<http://stlouis.cbslocal.com/2013/05/29/epa-radiation-at-west-lake-landfill-poses-no-health-threat/>

BRIDGETON, Mo. (KMOX) – Radiation at the West Lake Landfill in Bridgeton poses no threat to the public, according to an aerial survey conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency in March.

The agency conducted several low flights over the landfill and surrounding homes and businesses where radioactive waste was buried in the 1970s.

“The results of the ASPECT survey are consistent with previous studies that indicate the site’s radiological wastes remain contained inside Operable Unit 1,” EPA Regional Administrator Karl Brooks said. “The site is securely fenced and clearly marked with warning signs. Under these conditions, this material poses no health risks to the public. A person would have to illegally trespass onto the site to be exposed to elevated levels of radiation.”

The planes used in the survey: Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT) planes, are used to detect radiation at high-profile events such as the Super Bowl and presidential inaugurations.

Previous radiation screening surveys of the site, performed in 1994 and 1995, used ground-based detection equipment. Due to the overgrowth of small trees and heavy vegetation on significant portions of the site since those surveys, Region 7 chose instead to conduct an aerial survey using the ASPECT airplane.

Ed Smith with the Missouri Coalition for the Environment told KMOX before the results of the test were released that the data will either reinforce or contradict what ground monitors operated by the state have been indicating.

“If the EPA says that it detected something more than background levels of radiation, there’s a real cause for concern,” he said. “The equipment that’s being used to test for radiation around the landfill so far has detected nothing above quote background levels of radiation.”